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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/444,120	11/19/1999	YOSHIHIKO SHIODA	019441.023	8235

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DALBERT U SHEFTE
KENNEDY COVINGTON LOBDELL AND HICKMAN
4200 BANK OF AMERICA CORPORATE CENTER
100 N TRYON STREET
CHARLOTTE, NC 282024006

[REDACTED] EXAMINER

GORDON, RAEANN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3711	

DATE MAILED: 12/18/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/444,120

Applicant(s)

Yoshihiko Shiota

Examiner

Raeanne Gorden

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on Sep 24, 2002

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1, 3, 4, 6-24, 27, and 28 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) 3, 4, 6, 11-17, 24, 27, and 28 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 7-10 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1, 18-20, and 23 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 21 and 22 is/are objected to.

8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____

6) Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

In view of the appeal brief filed on 9-24-02, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED.

New grounds of rejection are set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

- (1) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,
 - (2) request reinstatement of the appeal.
- If reinstatement of the appeal is requested, such request must be accompanied by a supplemental appeal brief, but no new amendments, affidavits (37 CFR 1.130, 1.131 or 1.132) or other evidence are permitted. See 37 CFR 1.193(b)(2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 18, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Davis (3,168,312). Davis discloses a frame comprising a base, a vertical stand, a horizontal arm attached to the stand, a flexible cord attached to the horizontal arm, and a ball attached to the

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flexible cord adjacent the ground (see fig 1). Davis further discloses the device utilized for balls of differing weights and densities and may be struck with various types of striking implements (col 2, lines 1-5). Davis gives examples of softballs and baseballs as the type of larger ball that can be accommodated by the device (col 1, lines 65-70).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davis.

Davis discloses the invention as shown above but fails to include the height of the frame.

However, Davis discloses the device may be used for a variety of sports (col 2, lines 30-32).

Davis gives examples of using softballs and baseballs. It is obvious the height of the frame would fall between 1 ½ and 5 feet to accommodate the heights associated with sports such as softball and baseball.

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Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 21 and 22 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 7-10 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 and 18-23 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Raeann Gorden whose telephone number is (703) 308-8354. The examiner can normally be reached Monday-Fridays from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Sewell, can be reached on 703-308-2126. The fax number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-308-7768.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1148.

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*reopened 10/1/01
approved 10/1/01*
Paul T. Scott
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Custodia

rg

December 13, 2002